GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4046
ANSWERED ON:10.08.2017
Reclamation of Wasteland
Choudhary Col. (Retd) Sona Ram

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated schemes for reclaiming the wasteland in the country and if so, the details thereof;
(b) the progress made in reclaiming the wasteland during the last three years, State-wise;
(c) whether large tracts of wasteland are yet to be reclaimed in hilly and far flung desert areas particularly desert districts of Western Rajasthan like Barmer and Jaisalmer and if so, the details thereof;
(d) whether any action plan has been chalked out for utilizing such wasteland for productive purposes and if so, the details thereof; and
(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV)

(a) to (e): Data on area under wastelands in the country, including hilly and far flung desert areas of the country, is not centrally maintained in Department of Land Resources.

An assessment study commissioned by Department of Land Resources, which was conducted by National Remote Sensing Centre, namely "Wastelands Atlas of India - Change Analysis Based on Temporal Satellite Data of 2005-06 and 2008-09" (2011), inter alia contains district-wise estimated area under wastelands during 2005-06 and during 2008-09.
The estimated area under wastelands in the country was 47.22 million hectare during 2005-06 and 46.70 million hectare during 2008-09. The estimated area under wastelands, including hilly and far flung desert areas, in Rajasthan was 9.36 million hectare during 2005-06 and 8.49 million hectare during 2008-09. State-wise details of area under wastelands during 2005-06 vis-Ã -vis 2008-09 is given in Annexure I.
The "Wastelands Atlas of India - Change Analysis Based on Temporal Satellite Data of 2005-06 and 2008-09" (2011) is available in the public domain, including on the official website of the Department of Land Resources at http://dolr.nic.in/dolr/wasteland_atlas.asp.

Department of Land Resources has sanctioned 8214 watershed development projects in 28 States (except Goa) [during the period 2009-10 to 2014-15] covering an area of about 39.07 million hectare under the Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY) principally for development of rainfed portions of net cultivated area and culturable wastelands.
The major activities under the watershed development projects inter alia include ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rain water harvesting, nursery raising, afforestation, horticulture, pasture development, livelihood activities for the asset-less persons.

State-wise details of number of sanctioned projects, area covered by the projects and funds released as Central share [from 2009-10 to 2017-18 (upto 31st July 2017)] are given in Annexure II.

1025 watershed projects have been sanctioned in Rajasthan covering an area of 5.76 million hectare (during 2009-10 to 2014-15) and an amount of Rs.1872.68 crore has been released as Central share [from 2009-10 to 2017-18 (upto 31.07.2017)]. District-wise details of sanctioned projects and area covered by the projects are given in Annexure III.

The projects are at various stages of implementation. Priority is being given to qualitative and timely completion of the on-going projects. Administrative reports of completion of 674 projects have been received from 10 States from 1st April 2017 onwards (upto 23.07.2017). The details are given in Annexure IV.
As a systemic improvement, a protocol on formal completion and closure of WDC-PMKSY projects has been formulated by the Department of Land Resources in consultation with Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation and NITI Aayog. The protocol inter alia envisages to ensure (i) the due completion of unfinished works (if any), (ii) maintenance, (iii) security and (iv) sustainability of the watershed development projects. Before the projects are formally treated as closed by the Department of Land Resources, the completion and closure protocol has to be duly adopted by the States in respect of the projects administratively reported to have been completed. All States (except Goa) have been accordingly requested on 12th July 2017.
In addition to the WDC-PMKSY being implemented by Department of Land Resources, other Central Ministries / Departments like Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare are also implementing schemes and programmes like the per Drop More Crop component of PMKSY which inter alia includes activities for water conservation, drought proofing, water harvesting, ground water recharge, etc. that complement and supplement interventions undertaken under the WDC-PMKSY.
Further, under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), being implemented to inter alia prevent soil erosion and land degradation, all types of lands including wastelands are being developed with suitable need-based soil and water conservation measures and partly put to agricultural uses.
Also, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has launched Reclamation of Problem Soil (RPS) as a sub-scheme of Rashtriya

Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) during 2016-17 for reclamation of problem soils (Alkalinity/ Salinity and Acidity) on pilot basis in the States having higher extent of problem soil area.

In addition, National Afforestation & Eco-Development Board in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "National Afforestation Programme" for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining areas through peoples' participation in the country.

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